

***Remarks of Karlen Shupp  
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**To the Education Committee  
On S.B. No. 24, AN ACT CONCERNING EDUCATIONAL COMPETITIVENESS  
Section 30, *Education Privatization, Teacher Evaluation, Highly Qualified Teachers***

**February 21, 2012**

Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann, and members of the Education Committee, my name is Karlen Shupp, and I'm an English teacher in Trumbull. I would like to submit comments on Senate Bill 24, Section 30.

I have grave concerns over Governor Malloy's plan and how it will affect teachers and our students. His new plan creates financial uncertainty for all teachers and sets the stage for districts to value teachers who are not life-long learners or highly-qualified, trained professionals. I have worked hard for my advanced degrees. In fact, it is my M.Ed. in Secondary Education that allows me to be in the classroom, as my undergraduate study was in my subject field – English. If schools are not requiring Master's degrees and not compensating teachers who have earned them, teachers will not pursue these degrees. Not only will this will lead to serious repercussions in the classroom, but it will also spell trouble for graduate schools of education across the state as they see a sharp drop in enrollment.

The Malloy plan is supposed to address the achievement gap, but I believe it will do the opposite. With student achievement linked to evaluation and compensation, who will teach our most at-risk students? What will become of the population of special education students? Would you volunteer to teach them knowing that it could cost you dearly in salary? Governor Malloy's plan will do a great disservice to our neediest students. If we sincerely seek to close the achievement gap, we need our most qualified professionals to work with our most disadvantaged students. Also, communities that value teachers with advanced degrees and experience are going to seek these teachers out... and pay highly for them. This will lead to a greater disparity between districts, as the best and most qualified teachers will move to districts that value their educational backgrounds and graduate experiences, and the less-qualified teachers will work in lower paying districts. What is the motivation to work in a low-paying, low-performing district—where your evaluations could be negative because they're linked to student achievement—when you could work in a district with higher scores, more administrative and parent support, and richer resources?

Teachers work hard every day. The new evaluation procedure, which would affect my pay on a year to year basis, will be impacted most greatly by which administrator in my building is evaluating me and how much he or she likes me. The administrative team in my building is not consistent in how they discipline students for minor offenses like cutting a study hall; how can they be trusted to be consistent with their evaluation techniques? Having worked in different districts, I have also witnessed discrepancies between evaluations in different towns. I fear that

the inconsistencies tied to salary will only lead to an upsurge in grievances and a complete breakdown of the teacher-administrator relationship. There is an evaluation system in place right now which rewards hard work, weeds out teachers who underperform, and ensures that all teachers are treated fairly in the evaluation and termination process. The new plan would destroy this current system.

Malloy's plan also opens the door for private industries to profit off our public schools. No wonder this plan is moving along so quickly. The governor has appointed a commissioner of education with this philosophy, and the idea has leaked into the plans. I believe that public schools run best when there is no way for an independent for-profit organization to make money off of the success of hardworking teachers and school districts-- such as charter schools partially funded by public school districts but run by independent entrepreneurs. Do we want public education or private companies in each town? We can't have both.

Malloy's plan does not address the fact that student achievement hinges greatly on family life and home support. We can blame teachers all we want, but the fact of the matter is that students are more successful when they come from homes that encourage reading and value education. If anything, we need to think about how we could develop more early intervention programs before students even enter the public schools.

I believe the most disturbing parts of this plan will only drive good teachers out of their chosen career. The governor's plan makes teachers' prospects of owning homes and supporting their own children very grim when so many uncontrollable factors could determine how much money they make each year. I worked hard at my craft so I could be treated like a professional, not an employee with the level of compensation and job security of a door-to-door salesman. I fear that with all of these changes, we are going to keep our brightest students from even thinking about entering the field of education in the future. Not only will our system will suffer greatly, but this also puts the future of our nation in jeopardy at a time when we are falling behind other nations. Our students need highly educated, highly motivated teachers to make a difference in their lives. Gov. Malloy's plan cripples everything educators have been working for since the seventies and makes way for a disturbing new climate where cheaper, less experienced teachers are valued over highly qualified educators.